

principles which have been set forth by the whole essay. This, therefore, we shall quote *in extenso*:—

"We have in this chapter chiefly considered the instincts of animals under the point of view whether it is possible that they could have been acquired through the means indicated on our theory, or whether, even if the simpler ones could have been thus acquired, others are so complex and wonderful that they must have been specially endowed, and thus overthrow the theory. Bearing in mind the facts given on the acquirement, through the selection of self-originating tricks or modification of instinct, or through training and habit, aided in some slight degree by imitation, of hereditary actions and dispositions in our domesticated animals; and their parallelism (subject to having less time) to the instincts of animals in a state of nature: bearing in mind that in a state of nature instincts do certainly vary in some slight degree: bearing in mind how very generally we find in allied but distinct animals a gradation in the more complex instincts, which shows that it is at least possible that a complex instinct might have been acquired by successive steps; and which moreover generally indicate, according to our theory, the actual steps by which the instinct has been acquired, in as much as we suppose allied instincts to have branched off at different stages of descent from a common ancestor, and therefore to have retained, more or less unaltered, the instincts of the several lineal ancestral forms of any one species: bearing all this in mind, together with the certainty that instincts are as important to an animal as their generally correlated structures, and that in the struggle for life under changing conditions, slight modifications of instinct could hardly fail occasionally to be profitable to individuals, I can see no overwhelming difficulty on our theory. Even in the most marvellous instinct known, that of the cells of the hive-bee, we have seen how a simple instinctive action may lead to results which fill the mind with astonishment.

"Moreover, it seems to me that the very general fact of the gradation of complexity of instincts within the limits of the same group of animals; and likewise the fact of two allied species, placed in two distant parts of the world and surrounded by wholly different conditions of life, still having very much in common in their instincts, supports our theory of descent; for they are explained by it: whereas if we look at each instinct as specially endowed, we can only say that it is so. The imperfections and mistakes of instinct on our theory cease to be surprising: indeed it would be wonderful that far more numerous and flagrant cases could not be detected, if it were not that a species which has failed to become modified and so far perfected in its instincts that it could continue struggling with the co-inhabitants of the same region, would simply add one more to the myriads which have become extinct.

"It may not be logical, but to my imagination it is far more satisfactory, to look at the young cuckoo ejecting its foster-brothers, ants making slaves, the larvæ of the Ichneumonidæ feeding within the live bodies of their prey, cats playing with mice, otters and cormorants with living fish, not as instincts specially given by the Creator, but as very small parts of one general law leading to the advancement of all organic bodies—Multiply, Vary, let the strongest Live and the weakest Die."

PORTO RICO

THROUGH the courtesy of Sir Joseph Hooker, we are able to publish the following interesting communication from Baron Eggers on the island of Porto Rico:—

St. Thomas, October 22, 1883

DEAR SIR JOSEPH HOOKER,—It is a long time since I wrote you last. I have meanwhile at last accomplished

my long-cherished design, partly at least, of exploring the Luguillo Mountains in Porto Rico, which island I visited during April and May this year.

I spent about five weeks there, living for some time in the hut of a "fibaro" or native labourer on the Sierra, at an altitude of about 2200', on the edge of the primeval forests that still cover all the higher part of the mountain range.

Since my return I have been busy arranging my collections, the greater part of which appears in the ninth and tenth century of my "Flora Indiæ Occidentalis Exsiccata."

As for the general character of the Sierra forests, they of course resemble in their main outlines those of the other West India Islands. There is, however, especially one feature that strikes me as being peculiar to this mountain ridge compared with the woods of other islands, for example, of Dominica. Whilst the climate is just as moist in the Sierra of Porto Rico as in that of Dominica, the forests of Porto Rico seem nearly entirely destitute of epiphytes with the exception of some few Bromeliads and a very rarely occurring stray orchid. But orchids in general and epiphytical ferns, such as *Trichomanes* and *Hymenophyllum*, &c., are conspicuous by their absence. Of palms I found but one species, which I have distributed in my "Flora," I believe it is a *Euterpe*, grows gregariously at an altitude from 1500' to 3000'. No Cycads were seen at all.

On the other hand, I found several interesting trees, especially a beautiful *Talauma*, with immense, white, odorous flowers and silvery leaves, which would be very ornamental. The wood is used for timber, and called Sabino. A *Hirtella* with crimson flowers I also found rather common; it is not described in any of Grisebach's publications. An unknown tree with beautiful, orange-like foliage, and large, purple flowers very similar in shape to those of *Scaevola Plumieri*, split along one side, a tall *Lobeliaceæ*, a large *Heliconia*, nearly allied, it seems, to *H. caribbæa*, Lam., and several other as yet undetermined trees and shrubs, are among the most remarkable things found.

On the whole I was somewhat disappointed with regard to the result of the voyage, as I had expected a greater number of novelties, as well as a richer vegetation in general, at least something like the Caribbean Islands. But these partly negative results may no doubt be of some value also in forming an idea of the West Indian flora in general. Of tree-ferns, *Cyathea Serra* and an *Alsophila* were not uncommon.

One of the most conspicuous trees in some parts is the *Coccoloba macrophylla*, which I found on my first visit to Porto Rico. This tree is found up to an altitude of 2000', but chiefly near the coast, where it forms extensive woods in some places, which at the time of flowering, with immense, purple spikes more than a yard long, are very striking. The tree is named Ortegón by the inhabitants; it does not seem to occur on any of the British islands, but to be confined to Porto Rico and Hayti; at least I do not see it mentioned in Grisebach's "Cat. Plant. cubensium."

The people cultivate sugarcane in the plains, which are very fertile, yielding three hogsheads on an average per acre without any kind of manure. Besides this staple produce, a very good coffee is produced; it does not appear that any blight has as yet perceptibly affected the shrubs here. Rice is very commonly cultivated on the hills in the Sierra. I suppose it must be a kind of mountain variety, as no inundation or other kind of watering is used. Rice is in fact the staple food of the labourers, together with plantain and yautia, *i.e.* *Caladium esculentum*. Immense pastures of *Hymenachne striatum* (Malahojilla) occupy a part of the lowland, and feed large herds of cattle of an excellent quality. St. Thomas and the French islands all obtain their butcher's meat from

Porto Rico; I believe even Barbados comes to Porto Rico for cattle.

The island is very richly endowed by nature, but miserably governed, and the people themselves not worth a much better government, being given to gambling in the extreme throughout, thus squandering away every dollar, from the rich planter and priest down to the lowest labourer and beggar. Yet they are hospitable and very polite to strangers, with that remarkable, unchanging, inbred Spanish politeness.

It may finally interest you to hear, from the fact that you take a prominent part in the advancement of the material progress of the English West India Islands, how we are working in that respect here in St. Thomas.

I have on my estate now about 4000 Divi-Divi trees growing and doing well, except for the deer, which do much damage. On the coasts I have over 2000 coconut trees planted; cultivation of the *Sansevieria guineensis* is going on for making fibres; a large tract of land stocked with *Hæmatoxylon* I have now preserved, and try to make it a regular forest, to be cut down gradually.

In company with an engineer here I have now ordered a machine from England, Smith's fibre machine, which is being used in the Mauritius, in order to work up our immense quantity of *Agave* and *Fourcroya*, the raw material being close at hand in unlimited quantity near the sea.

I have published a couple of articles on the material resources of these islands in one of the largest Danish newspapers, of which I beg to send you a copy, in order to make private persons and Government move. Among the former a good many have started on, but, as you may perhaps have heard, governments are sometimes slow in moving, representing, as they do eminently, that great law of nature, *vis inertia*.

However, so far, and considering the short space of time, I am very well satisfied. I think there is a fair chance now of the West Indies in general entering upon a new prosperous career.

I am also going to try experiments with the manufacture of tannin extracts from bark of *Coccoloba*, *Rhizophora*, and the pods of the various Acacias, which are a great nuisance here on account of their rapid growth.

The *Aloe sempervirens* will also be made useful in a similar manner as in Barbados and Curaçoa, it growing here spontaneously on barren rocks. H. EGGERS

THE REMARKABLE SUNSETS

UNDER the headings of "Cloud-Glow" and "Optical Phenomena" we have published several letters already on the recent remarkable sunsets; we have received many others, the most important of which we bring together here:—

PERHAPS it will interest you and your readers to hear that the phenomenon called "cloud-glow" in your last numbers, was seen also at Berlin on the three evenings of November 28, 29, and 30. As far as I could overlook the sky, the details were almost the same as your correspondents describe them: A greenish sunset at 3.50, an unusually bright red sky with flashes of light starting from south-west. An interesting physiological phenomenon which we call "Contrast-Farben," was there beautifully illustrated by some clouds, no longer reached by direct sunlight; they looked intensely green on the red sky. At 4.30 the streets were lighted by a peculiarly pale glare, as if seen through a yellow glass. Then darkness followed, and the stars became visible. But half an hour afterwards, at 5 o'clock, the western sky was again coloured by a pink or crimson glow. Persons who were not quite sure about its direction mistook it for a Polar aurora; others spoke of a great fire in the neighbourhood. If atmospheric refraction could be neglected, the matter

(whatever it may be) thus illuminated by the sun one hour after sunset and 45° above the horizon, would be found to be at a height of about forty miles! At 6 o'clock all was over. The first day (November 28) this glow was still stranger, because the lower western sky was covered by a large, dark cumulus-cloud; but besides this the three remarkable evening skies were quite like each other.

ROBERT VON HELMHOLTZ

N.W. Berlin, Neue Wilhelmstrasse 16, December 1

P.S.—To-day it rains; nevertheless an unusual brightness was to be seen in the west till 7 o'clock, which perhaps may be attributed to the same "glow."—R. v. H.

THE red glow described by your correspondents continued to be visible here every evening until yesterday (2nd inst.), and there was another fine display of *rayons du crépuscule*. Is not "cloud-glow" a misnomer as applied to what is seen in perfection only when there are no clouds, and is invisible when the clouds are thick? "After-glow" is too comprehensive an expression, as it embraces the usual effects of a brilliant sunset, and too limited, as it could not be applied to the phenomenon as recently seen before sunrise. In the absence of a scientific title for something which has been but little investigated, might not the name "upper-glow" be adopted, in contrast to the under-glow which is the predominant feature of ordinary effective sunsets. The red colour of the reflected light is in both cases I suppose equally due to diffraction, particles suspended in the air obstructing the rays of least wave-length. But in the "upper-glow" the reflecting matter is at a great height above the cloud-level, in the "under-glow" it consists of the lower surface of the clouds themselves. ANNIE LEY

December 3

Erratum.—In the first paragraph of my letter of the 27th ult. (p. 103) 2600 should be 26,000.

THE following extracts from my observations at York may assist in determining the cause of the extraordinary series of sunrise and sunset effects during the past month:—November 24: Unusual cloud tinge in morning. November 25: Similar effect in morning. From 2.45 to 3 p.m., blue sky from 10° to 25° or 30° from the sun, of a delicate rose pink. This noticed by several, when asked to say if they saw anything peculiar. It gave a greenish-gray cast to cirro-cumuli through which it was seen. Round the sun the sky looked yellowish. 5.30 p.m., "the west ruddy as from glare of fire;" not entirely gone till 6. Time of local sunset 3.38, calculated from almanac and observed sunrise on 28th.

A letter from my father, Street, Somerset, 26th, evening, speaks of "a wide arc above the sunset lit up with the most glorious pink shade. The clouds low in the horizon a stone-gray; but the most remarkable of all was a longish cloud to the north of sunset and above and beyond the circle of pink; that was a bright sage green. I never before saw such a colour in any cloud. . . . Later, rays shot up from the sun like the rays of aurora."

28th: Same pink halo at noon. Cloud-glare on morning of 26th and 27th; to-day, about 6 a.m. (sun rose at York 8.0, set 3.35). Sunset most striking; pink above, orange lower at 4.20; grass appeared of brownish sage green. At 5 p.m. lit up all over like red aurora. 29th: Same red glare, like that of a fire, at 6.20 a.m. Glare gone by 6.35; cirri in east-south-east lit up by 6.45. True sunrise glow 7.10; orange at base turned to yellow-green at 7.25, and cirri again black; relit at 7.35, with rosy tinge. Sun seen to rise clear of horizon at 8.2; Jupiter visible among faint haze until 8.13. 9.45 a.m., rosy glow round sun; 4.30 p.m., a fading ordinary sunset; 4.45, glare reappearing; 5 p.m., "finer than ever," as observed by Mrs. Clark. December 3: Remarkable lurid effects, 4.30 to 5.0 p.m. Letters from Street and Birmingham mention similar effects on the 28th and 29th. A para-